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General debate on national experience in population matters: realizing the future we want — integrating population issues into sustainable development, including in the post-2015 development agenda

Statement submitted by Amis des étrangers au Togo, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

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Statement

Sustainable development and human development

At the beginning God created heaven and earth. Then he created the elements on planet earth, including man. Before creating the planet, God had a plan, and everything that he created has a logically consistent sense aimed at humanity's greater well-being.

Goal: Sustainable development designed to enable humanity to eradicate poverty by 2030.

Currently, man is the creator of his own misfortune. Having obtained fire through the spirit of creativity, man built factories and industries that provide him with material goods. But how are human creations used?

Thanks to fire, man prepares his meals using such forest products as wood and charcoal. Since the population increases every year (it is expected to rise from 7 billion in 2013 to 9 billion in 2050), human needs will be greater in future.

As a result, more forests and biodiversity disappear every year (in Togo, for instance, at the annual rate of 15,000 ha) to meet man's vital needs. Believing that he satisfies his current needs, man is unaware that he is committing suicide, killing the generations to come through deforestation and greenhouse-gas and forest-carbon production. Climate change, a direct consequence of such attitudes, causes rainfall, crucial to agricultural development, to be irregular. The resulting poor harvests, poverty, hunger and malnutrition lead to intra- and extra-continental and rural migration. These phenomena create other socio-economic problems compounded by racism, xenophobia and racial discrimination. For the period after 2015, it is imperative to review our ways of managing this world and its future prospects so to save humanity, which is steeped in uncertainty about tomorrow. Sustainable development goals, which are clear, must be pursued before it is too late: it is necessary not to exclude anyone, in other words to take everyone (indigenous women, migrants, persons with disabilities, older persons, young unemployed workers and other minorities) into account in all development activities. Not all countries, communities or individuals do so systematically. That is why education constitutes the most effective means for changing human behaviour so as to promote the post-2015 development agenda. Marginalisation of others, lack of democracy, corruption, egocentricism, cupidity and jealousy are often the cause of conflict.

Sustainable development is based on respect for human rights. That strengthens peace, a key to any development. It is incumbent on political decision-makers, parliamentarians and judicial authorities to use those elements in order to free men, women and children throughout the world from misery and poverty. Civil society must henceforth play a fundamental role in the sustainable development of the various countries. That is appropriate because civil society is close to the population, lives with it and can assess its needs. Protection and depoliticization of civil society is indispensable to the success of sustainable development. Thus, NGOs will be able to blossom and serve the peoples through involvement in the fight against climate change; promotion of peace based on an inclusive society; protection, restoration and promotion of biodiversity and forests; preservation and rational use of the oceans, the seas and their resources; reduction of inequalities within and among nations; inclusive economic development, with efficient resource

allocation and Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) in agriculture, energy and the drinking water supply, accessible to all with a view to a fuller life and well-being for all ages through food security, adequate nutrition, and elimination of hunger and poverty. Such improvements are impossible without a change in attitudes. Accordingly, education and sensitization to sustainable development are crucial because they will ensure generation of decent employment for all and will facilitate the construction of resilient infrastructure, innovation and inclusive industrialization.

The report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations entitled "The Road to Dignity by 2030" and especially the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda by world leaders reveal the international community's commitment to achieving the goals of sustainable development, which is linked to human development. All the projects must be based on the digital data revolution.

Funding and the relevant financing methods must be reviewed so that grants and bequests may be made available to civil society, especially in poor or developing countries, in which it often lacks financial resources to implement its initiatives, since its sole source of income consists in member contributions, while internal revenue sources (taxes, levies, customs duties etc.) finance the States.

Partnerships between the civil society and governments are a positive element but the international community should support civil society as much as national budgets in order to ensure balance among the actions of all stakeholders.

Recommendations

- Depoliticizing the social space;
- Providing development NGOs with access to business and marketing;
- Requiring governments to cooperate effectively with civil society bodies registered with DESA in connection with sustainable development;
- Requiring Member States to recognize and protect such bodies.

Sustainable development is the business of all. Governments, the civil society, communities and individuals, in short everyone, must contribute to reorganizing this world, which God kindly bequeathed to us and which, it is our intimate conviction, we are destroying.

Thanks to all readers.